

Well, my Legitimate, if this Letter speed,  
And my invention thrive, *Edmond* the base  
Shall to th' Legitimate: I grow, I prosper:  
Now Gods, stand vp for Bastards.

*Enter Gloucester.*

*Glo.* Kent banish'd thus? and France in choller parted?  
And the King gone to night? Prescrib'd his powre,  
Confin'd to exhibition? All this done  
Vpon the gad? *Edmond*, how now? What newes?

*Bast.* So please your Lordship, none.

*Glo.* Why so earnestly seeke you to put vp y Letter?

*Bast.* I know no newes, my Lord.

*Glo.* What Paper were you reading?

*Bast.* Nothing my Lord.

*Glo.* No? what needd then that terrible dispatch of  
it into your Pocket? The quality of nothing, hath not  
such neede to hide it selfe. Let's see: come, if it bee no-  
thing, I shall not neede Spectacles.

*Bast.* I beseech you Sir, pardon mee; it is a Letter  
from my Brother, that I haue not all ore-read; and for so  
much as I haue perus'd, I finde it not fit for your ore-look-  
ing.

*Glo.* Giue me the Letter, Sir.

*Bast.* I shall offend, either to detaine, or giue it:  
The Contents, as in part I vnderstand them,  
Are too blame.

*Glo.* Let's see, let's see.

*Bast.* I hope for my Brothers iustification, hee wrote  
this but as an essay, or taste of my Vertue.

*Glo. reads.* This policie, and reuerence of Age, makes the  
world bitter to the best of our times: keeps our Fortunes from  
vs, till our oldnesse cannot relish them. I begin to finde an idle  
and fond bondage, in the oppression of aged tyranny, who swayes  
not as it hath power, but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of  
this I may speake more. If our Father would sleepe till I wak'd  
him, you should enioy halfe his Reuennew for euer, and line the  
beloued of your Brother.

*Edgar.*  
Hum? Conspiracy? Sleepe till I wake him, you should  
enioy halfe his Reuennew: my Sonne *Edgar*, had hee a  
hand to write this? A heart and braine to breede it in?  
When came you to this? Who brought it?

*Bast.* It was not brought mee, my Lord: there's the  
cunning of it. I found it throwne in at the Casement of  
my Closset.

*Glo.* You know the character to be your Brothers?

*Bast.* If the matter were good my Lord, I durst swear  
it were his: but in respect of that, I would faine thinke it  
were not.

*Glo.* It is his.

*Bast.* It is his hand, my Lord: but I hope his heart is  
not in the Contents.

*Glo.* Has he neuer before founded you in this busines?

*Bast.* Neuer my Lord. But I haue heard him oft main-  
taine it to be fit, that Sonnes at perfect age, and Fathers  
declin'd, the Father should bee as Ward to the Son, and  
the Sonne manage his Reuennew.

*Glo.* O Villain, villain: his very opinion in the Let-  
ter. Abhorred Villaine, vnaturall, detested, brutish  
Villaine; worse then brutish: Go sirrah, seeke him: Ile  
apprehend him. Abominable Villaine, where is he?

*Bast.* I do not well know my L. If it shall please you to  
suspend your indignation against my Brother, till you can  
deriue from him better testimony of his intent, you should  
run a certaine course: where, if you violently proceed a-  
gainst him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great  
gap in your owne Honor, and shake in peeces, the heart of

his obedience. I dare pawne downe my life for him, that  
he hath writ this to feele my affection to your Honor, &  
to no other pretence of danger.

*Glo.* Thinke you so?

*Bast.* If your Honor iudge it meete, I will place you  
where you shall heare vs conferre of this, and by an Audi-  
tural assurance haue your satisfaction, and that without  
any further delay, then this very Euening.

*Glo.* He cannot bee such a Monster. *Edmond* seeke  
him out: winde me into him, I pray you: frame the Bu-  
sinesse after your owne wisdom. I would vstate my  
selfe, to be in a due resolution.

*Bast.* I will seeke him Sir, presently: conuey the bu-  
sinesse as I shall finde means, and acquaint you withall.

*Glo.* These late Eclipses in the Sun and Moone por-  
tend no good to vs: though the wisdom of Nature can  
reason it thus, and thus, yet Nature finds it selfe scourg'd  
by the sequent effects. Loue cooles, friendship falls off,  
Brothers diuide. In Cities, mutinies; in Countries, dis-  
cord; in Pallaces, Treason; and the Bond crack'd, 'twixt  
Sonne and Father. This villaine of mine comes vnder the  
prediction; there's Son against Father, the King fals from  
byas of Nature, there's Father against Childe. We haue  
seene the best of our time. Machinations, hollownesse,  
treacherie, and all ruinous disorders follow vs disquietly  
to our Graues. Find out this Villain, *Edmond*, it shall lose  
thee nothing, do it carefully: and the Noble & true-har-  
ted Kent banish'd; his offence, honesty. This strange, *Exit*

*Bast.* This is the excellent foppery of the world, that  
when we are sicke in fortune, often the surlets of our own  
behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters, the Sun, the  
Moone, and Starres, as if we were villaines on necessity,  
Fooler by heauenly compulsion, Knaues, Theeues, and  
Trachers by Spherickall predominance. Drunkards, Ly-  
ars, and Adulterers by an inforc'd obedience of Planetary  
influence; and all that we are cull in, by a diuine thrus-  
ting on. An admirable euasion of Whore-master-man,  
to lay his Goatish disposition on the charge of a Starre.  
My father compounded with my mother vnder the Dra-  
gons taile, and my Natiuity was vnder Vrsa Maior, so  
that it followes, I am rough and Lecherous. I should  
haue bin that I am, had the maidenleft Starre in the Fir-  
mament twinkled on my bastardizing.

*Enter Edgar.*

*Pat:* he comes like the Catastrophe of the old Comedie:  
my Cue is villanous Melancholly, with a sigh like *Tom*  
*o'Bedlam*. — O these Eclipses do portend these diui-  
sions. Fa, Sol, La, Me.

*Edg.* How now Brother *Edmond*, what serious con-  
templation are you in?

*Bast.* I am thinking Brother of a prediction I read this  
other day, what should follow these Eclipses.

*Edg.* Do you busie your selfe with that?

*Bast.* I promise you, the effects he writes of, succcede  
vnhappily.

When saw you my Father last?

*Edg.* The night gone by.

*Bast.* Spake you with him?

*Edg.* I, two houres together.

*Bast.* Parted you in good termes? Found you no dis-  
pleasure in him, by word, nor countenance?

*Edg.* None at all.

*Bast.* Berhink your selfe wherein you may haue offen-  
ded him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence, vntill  
some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure,  
which at this instant forageth in him, that with the mil-

chief of your person, it would fearfully alay.

*Edg.* Some Villaine hath done me wrong.

*Edm.* That's my feare, I pray you haue a continent  
forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower: and as  
I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will  
sily bring you to heare my Lord speake: pray ye goe,  
there's my key: if you do stirre abroad, goe arm'd.

*Edg.* Arm'd, Brother?

*Edm.* Brother, I aduise you to the best, I am no honest  
man, if ther be any good meaning toward you: I haue told  
you what I haue seene, and heard: But faintly. Nothing  
like the image, and horror of it, pray you away.

*Edg.* Shall I heare from you anon?

*Exit.*

*Edm.* I do serue you in this businesse:  
A Credulous Father, and a Brother Noble,  
Whose nature is so farre from doing harmes,  
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honestie  
My practises ride easie: I see the businesse.  
Let me, if not by birth, haue lands by wit,  
All with me's meete, that I can fashion fit,

*Exit.*

### Scena Tertia.

*Enter Gonerill, and Steward.*

*Gon.* Did my Father strike my Gentleman for chi-  
ding of his Foole?

*Ste.* I Madam.

*Gon.* By day and night, he wrongs me, euery howre  
He flashes into one gross crime, or other,  
That sets vs all at odds: Ile not endure it;  
His Knights grow riotous, and himselfe vpbraides vs  
On euery trifle. When he returns from hunting,  
I will not speake with him, say I am sicke,  
If you come slacke of former seruices,  
You shall do well, the fault of it Ile answer.

*Ste.* He's coming Madam, I heare him.

*Gon.* Put on what weary negligence you please,  
You and your Fellowes: I'de haue it come to question;  
If he distaste it, let him to my Sister,  
Whose mind and mineel know in that are one,  
Remember what I haue said.

*Ste.* Well Madam.

*Gon.* And let his Knights haue colder lookes among  
you: what growes of it no matter, aduise your fellowes  
so, Ile write straight to my Sister to hold my courses pre-  
pare for dinner.

*Exeunt.*

### Scena Quarta.

*Enter Kent.*

*Kent.* If but as will I other accents borrow,  
That can my speech defuse, my good intent  
May carry through it selfe to that full issue  
For which I traiz'd my likenesse. Now banish't *Kent*,  
If thou canst serue where thou dost stand condemn'd,  
So may it come, thy Master whom thou lo'ust,  
Shall finde thee full of labours.

*Hornes within.*

*Lear.* Let me not sta-  
dy: how now, what art thou?

*Kent.* A man Sir.

*Lear.* What dost thou  
with vs?

*Kent.* I do professe to  
him truly that will put  
honest to conuerse with  
seare iudgement, to fight  
cate no fish.

*Lear.* What art thou?

*Kent.* A very honest  
the King.

*Lear.* If thou be'st a  
King, thou art poore eno

*Kent.* Seruice.

*Lear.* Who would'st  
thou be?

*Kent.* Do'st thou kn

*Kent.* No Sir, but yo

which I would faine cal

*Lear.* What's that?

*Kent.* Authority.

*Lear.* What seruices

*Kent.* I can keepe he

curious tale in telling

bluntly: that which on

lified in, and the best of

*Lear.* How old art thou?

*Kent.* Not so young

nor so old to dote on he

my backe forty eight.

*Lear.* Follow me, the

worse after dinner, I wi

ho, dinner, where's my k

my Foole hither. You y

*Exit.*

*Ste.* So please you

*Lear.* What saies th

pole backe: wher's my

asleepe, how now? Wh

*Knigh.* He saies my

*Lear.* Why came no

call'd him?

*Knigh.* Sir, he answer

would not.

*Lear.* He would not

*Knigh.* My Lord,

but to my iudgement y

with that Ceremonio

theres a great abatement

the generall dependants

your Daughter.

*Lear.* Ha? Saist thou

*Knigh.* I beseech yo

mistaken, for my duty

your Highnesse wrong'

*Lear.* Thou but rem

ception, I haue percei

which I haue rather bla

sties, then as a very pre

I will looke further into

haue not seene him this

*Knigh.* Since my yo